



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department Of Agriculture Rural Development
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USDA Rural Development Provides Grants Promoting Energy Efficiency and Value-Added Endeavors

Orchard, Neb. November 21, 2005-USDA Rural Development's Scot Blehm, state director for Nebraska, recognized four recipients of nearly \$44,000 in grants today. The grants will assist in conserving energy and increasing economic opportunities through the development of new products and markets for agriculturally based products.

"The energy and value-added grants being recognized today will help ensure the profitability and sustainability of these rural producers and businesses," stated Blehm. "With the dollars saved on energy and the money being kept at home with the producers from value-added efforts, Nebraska's rural economy will gain strength, making it possible for more rural communities to thrive."

Recipients include:

- Randy Hughes of Royal received \$5,740 to replace an inefficient pump, accessories and electric motor with new energy efficient irrigation equipment. The improvements will save 68 percent in energy consumption and return the cost of investment in 6 years.
- RGR Farms of Royal will use \$7,120 to convert two diesel powered irrigation motors to electric power. An energy savings of 60.26 percent or 1,179,897,712 British thermal units (btus) equating to a yearly savings of \$5,167 will be net.
- Seger Funeral Home Inc. of Atkinson awarded \$6,000 to replace old inefficient heating/cooling equipment and windows with a new highly efficient system and windows. Improvements will reduce energy consumption by over 35 percent.
- Unified Soy Products, LLC of Orchard received \$25,000 to conduct a site analysis, feasibility & marketing studies and a business plan for building a combination soybean crushing facility and soy bio-diesel production plant.

Statewide, \$418,348 in energy grants were awarded in Fiscal Year 2005 assisting in 36 energy efficiency improvements projects and 1 renewable energy. Value-added grants totaling \$1,113,540 assisted 16 producers in value-added ventures. The 2002 Farm Bill made available monies for both energy and value-added projects. Since the beginning of these programs, Nebraska has received nearly \$778,000 for 57 energy projects and over \$7.7 million assisting in 54 value-added ventures.

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Energy grants are awarded to farmers, ranchers, and for-profit small rural businesses for renewable energy systems such as wind, solar, biomass, biogas, or geothermal sources or hydrogen derived from biomass or water using wind, solar, or geothermal energy sources; and for energy efficiency improvement projects such as improvements to HVAC systems, insulation, refrigeration, lighting, pumping systems, air systems, motor systems, irrigation systems, etc.

Value-added grants help producers to expand the customer base for their commodities through a value-added activity that allows producers to retain a greater profit in the marketplace.

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